

Eckhart Tolle - Talks at Google Eckhart Tolle in Conversation with Bradley Horowitz

[Speaker 3] (0:03 - 3:38)

Hello, everyone. Welcome. I'm Rich Fernandez from the Learning and Development Team here at Google.

So about six months ago, we wrote a letter to Eckhart Tolle inviting him to come here to Google. Eckhart, dude, come to Google, we said. Well, something along those lines.

We make some of the world's most valued and most used technology. We aspire to do epic stuff and to make a difference in the world. And yet, even as we create this dazzling technology, we want to be sure to pay attention to our own inner technology.

We want to ask ourselves the searching and far-ranging questions about how we're getting on in the world. As we optimize our technology, how can we also optimize our lives so that we can be our best selves? All of this is a lot easier said than done.

We operate in a hyperconnected world, always on. And we go at it with great pace and intensity. The urgent question of the day is how we can take an intelligent approach to our work and our lives with all of the demands of our time and attention.

Amidst this flood of information, how can we discern the signal from the noise in order to access and act on what is most essential to each of us? Eckhart Tolle takes a refreshingly contemporary approach to the question of what it means to live a meaningful and inspired life and with great intelligence. And in so being, how we can each experience a great sense of clarity, peace, and the joy of being alive.

So we're very lucky that Eckhart accepted our invitation and said yes to come here today. He knows our ethos, that we have a profound interest in being our best selves and doing meaningful and inspired work. We seek to change the world for the better.

And he understands that we understand that in order to transform the world, we must first render the necessary transformation within ourselves. So Eckhart is here today to assist and suggest with some things for us to consider. Eckhart Tolle has written best-selling books, including *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth*.

And they've sold millions of copies worldwide and have been translated into 33 languages. He is widely regarded as one of the foremost teachers on the subject of wisdom and conscious living. Joining Eckhart in conversation today is our vice president of product, Bradley Horowitz.

Now when we proposed to Bradley that he might engage in a dialogue with Eckhart as part of this tech talk, he was really excited, which makes sense because Bradley's cool

like that. Bradley also helped create Google+, Google Apps, and Google+, which we all love. So without further ado, please join me in welcoming Eckhart Tolle and Bradley Horowitz as they discuss what it means to live with meaning, purpose, and wisdom in the digital age.

[Speaker 2] (3:52 - 4:47)

So on behalf of Google and all the many Googlers here and those tuning in from our overflow rooms, welcome. It's great to have you here. And it's very special to have you here.

I understand that you don't often visit corporations. And so this has been a journey we've taken together over the course of the day. Eckhart had a moment to meet with some of us earlier.

And we found that really valuable. And one of the things we discussed this morning was wisdom. And the difference between information and wisdom.

Google has a mission to organize the world's information. And I think if you think about the hierarchy, there's signal and data and information and knowledge. And at the very top of the pyramid is wisdom.

And I wondered if you could comment a little bit on what you understand to be the difference between information and wisdom.

[Speaker 1] (4:49 - 26:28)

Good question. Let's set that aside for just one moment to say how happy I am to be here, how impressed I am by what I have seen, and by the people who work here and the general energy field in the company. And if you have come, many young people here, if you've come straight from college, then I'm sure you don't know how lucky you are until you start working for another company.

Perhaps everybody who works here, as they would say in India, you must have very good karma to be working here. The openness of people that's reflected in the structure of the company, the way things are arranged, the little rooms that you have for quietness, for meditation, the cafeterias, and all that is just beyond belief. So I also experience an openness in the people who work here and far less ego, because many companies are still predominantly run by very big egos.

I'm not saying that everybody here is entirely free of ego yet, but much less so than in many other places. So it's wonderful to be here. And if my book sales ever decline and I need a job, I hope you will probably want, because first of all, I have no computer skills.

And secondly, I'm too old, since the average age here is probably about 30. So your

question was important. I remember it.

I don't. Knowledge, information, and wisdom, how do they relate? Of course, with the technological revolution, information revolution, digital revolution, whatever you call it, there's an enormous amount of knowledge available to everybody.

Almost the whole of the world's knowledge, and there's the interconnectedness between people and so on. That's all very good, of course, to have all that accessible to you. Information, there's a danger, though, that you get drowned in too much information and too much knowledge.

And by drowned, I mean that the mind gets bombarded with an excess of input. And therefore, you miss something that is essential for a human life to be truly fulfilled. And that is a place of peace, inner peace or stillness, a place that one could describe as the source of all intelligence that many people don't actually don't even realize exists within them.

So I'd like to just talk briefly about that, that really, we're talking about the core of what spirituality means. Spirituality is not having a particular belief structure. It's not subscribing to a particular set of thoughts.

Spirituality is discovering a dimension within yourself that is, we can either say, deeper or higher than the continuous movement of thinking. And of course, all this information and knowledge is experienced in you as thought. So the thinking mind has always been active for many thousands of years in humans.

But now it's even more active than before, because it gets energized by the incredible increase in input. Before, all you had was the simple sensory input in your immediate surroundings. Then later came books, so you have the added input of that.

And then gradually came the mass media, and now this incredible revolution of information technology, computers, and so on. So it energizes that movement of thought that's taking place in every human, which in itself is not necessarily a bad thing. It only becomes a bad thing and self-destructive thing if that is all you experience inside you in your consciousness.

If all you ever experience is that, I call it sometimes mental noise, then you begin to derive your identity from the thoughts in your head, what the thoughts tell you about yourself, and you are trapped in that identity that is based on identification with thinking. All spiritual teachings point to the possibility of finding something in you that is deeper than thinking, a space, a stillness that's always there. And the informational excess of information, you can only successfully deal with that if you have a balance in your consciousness between using your mind to absorb information, to put out new information, to work on the information that you have taken in, input.

If you have a balance between that and something that is deeper than thought in you. And really, instead of giving you new knowledge here, I don't want to do that, because I don't want to add to the knowledge that you're taking in anyway, far more than you ever need. So instead of giving you knowledge here, I'd like to suggest that you experience at first hand in yourself that place of, I call it sometimes a presence, where you are alert, conscious, but not thinking.

And every creative person has some access to that realm. If you have a truly creative insight, you have to go to that place that is deeper than analytical thinking. Analytical thinking itself, or processing information, is not creative.

So even to find a creative, a new solution to a problem in your life requires some creative insight. So whether it's a problem in your work situation, or your personal life, or something that you need to build or do and you have come to a dead end, or you want to create something, whatever it is, a work of art, or a new system for the computer, I don't know the expressions for that, you need to go to the place where creativity arises. And every human who is creative has some access to that, even if they don't know it.

But it's not only the place where creativity arises, it's also the place that gives sanity to your life, to find a place of stillness, peace, aliveness, where you are not burdened by most, a lot of the time, unnecessary mental noise. So when you do start thinking again, it actually can be more productive. So where is that place?

How do you find that place if it's there in everyone? How do I realize that within myself? That's really the question.

I can just suggest to you three or four entry points into that state of consciousness. And after I've done that, we can carry on the conversation. A very simple entry point, and this is why my first book is called *The Power of Now*, is the realization that your entire life consists of the present moment and only the present moment ever.

Now, most people, perhaps in some abstract way, they know that, but they cannot sense or feel the truth of that. And I'd like to invite you to actually sense and feel the truth of what I'm saying, which even if there's a great philosopher here, he or she cannot argue with this statement that whatever you experience ever is present moment. Your entire life unfolds in the present moment.

That's all you ever have. Most people don't live as if this were true. They live as if the opposite almost were true, as if the future moment were more important always than the next one.

And that happens because of excessive identification with thinking, because usually the thoughts are about the next thing, the next, and the next, or what could happen, or might happen, and so on. So if you can just come to this realization, well, this is all I ever

have and ever experience is this moment. This is undoubtedly true.

There is nothing else ever. And at that moment, when you fully realize that, you can only realize that an alertness arises in you, you become alert to, one could almost call it, the presence of the power of this moment, of the power of life itself in this present moment, which consists of, yes, it consists of sense perceptions. It also consists of, well, let's look, what is this present moment?

This present moment is this room, what we perceive here, what we visually, what we see here, the lights, the totality of the room. So let's become alert so that we can really perceive that. And beyond that which we perceive in this room, is there anything else that we could call the present moment?

Well, if you look deeply enough, yes, there is also the inner energy field in your body that you can actually feel, that you are alive, in your legs, your arms, your feet, that's also part of the present moment, to sense the energy field that pervades the physical body, that's also something you can feel. So there's external sense perceptions. And there's the feeling, the aliveness inside your body.

And if you're totally in thinking, you can't feel that at all, you don't feel alive, you're only alive in the upper story of the house, your head. The entire house you don't inhabit then. So you inhabit, you begin to inhabit the entire body.

This becomes part of your experience of the present moment. So sense perceptions, yes. And there is an aliveness even to artificial light.

Of course, you might say, I prefer sunlight. OK, me too. But there's a beauty and aliveness even to artificial light.

And there's a beauty and aliveness that is usually overlooked that's in the texture of this chair here, or whatever you're wearing, and certainly the flowers. And suddenly you become aware of that. And that's not all yet.

We're just going into the present moment. So you have that, externals, and you suddenly appreciate the aliveness of all the things that surround you. Other people have to take acid to get there.

So you don't need that. You know with acid people, sometimes they look at a teapot and they say, wow. Oh my god.

But you don't need to do that. Just be present. And then you appreciate the beauty even of a mass-produced teapot.

If it's handmade and hand-painted, even nicer. But even a mass-produced teapot has a presence there. It's there.

And it's in a live energy field. Every physicist will tell you it's not a dead teapot. It's molecules and atoms in continuous movement.

Everything is vitally alive. And you miss that if you're totally trapped in the mental noise all the time, taking in information. Present moment, sense perceptions.

So the inner energy field of the body. And then what else is there to the present moment? Then you have to go become really alert.

And the next thing that you notice about the present moment is really at the deeper level of the present moment. It's not something that arises in your consciousness, as does the table and this room, and even the inner energy field of the body. These are all things, objects, that arise in your consciousness.

But if you go deeper even into the present moment, what you encounter is the most incredible secret of human life, which is you encounter the fact that at the bottom of it all, you are conscious. There is the presence that you are, without which you couldn't perceive anything. You couldn't perceive this room.

And you couldn't feel the body without that consciousness that you essentially are, which Jesus, by the way, called the light of the world. He said to his disciples, you are the light of the world. And these disciples were not special people.

They were fishermen. So certainly he wasn't telling them that they are VIPs. They were the opposite of VIPs.

And yet he said, you are the light of the world. He also said it about himself. But he also said it about others.

And so you suddenly discover that essentially, at the most essential level, the essence of who you are is consciousness. But consciousness isn't something you can say, ah, there it is. Because consciousness cannot become an object to itself.

It's the eternal subject, the I am that I am of the Old Testament, where when God is asked for his or her name, God says, I am that I am. That is the essential identity of all beings. So when we talk about the present moment, we talk about different levels of the present moment, from sense perceptions, to the feeling of aliveness in the inner body, to the realization that ultimately, what we call the present moment and the light of consciousness are one and the same, because that's the thing that always remains.

And that consciousness, you can sense it as yourself, right now, the presence that you are, even beyond the physical presence. And that is the alertness, that is the realization that is sometimes called awakening. And that is the place of also of stillness, where you get out of the mental noise.

And that is the source place of creativity. That is intelligence that is non-conceptual. It's primordial intelligence.

And if you touch that in yourself, then at first as glimpses, as brief realizations, and then gradually integrated into your daily life, then you can live from that place, the source, and be not only a more productive human being, but also a more peaceful human being, because then you no longer contribute to the conflict in this world, because the conflict is only created by all those humans who don't know that level in themselves.

They don't know who they are. And again, to call Jesus again on the crosses and forgive them, they know not what they do. And why do they know not what they do?

They don't know who they are, essentially. So I've talked about this. And in the hope that as I'm speaking, there is an experience in you of really the depths of the present moment, because the present moment, people think its present moment is what happens.

And of course, because what happens changes all the time, people say there are many present moments. If you look more deeply, of course, there are not many present moments. There's only ever this present moment.

There's only this ever. So there are not many present moments. There's only the space of this moment.

So there's what happens in it, and there is the space in which it happens, and that space is consciousness. And that is who you are. And when you realize that, you become free of the false sense of self, which your mind tells you something about who you are, which has to do with your history, and your successes, or your failures, or what other people tell you who you are, a little present.

So that's really basically the essence of spirituality, which is very simple, but for some reason, it's not taught at school. All kinds of inessential things are taught at school. But what really matters, the very foundation of human life, and it's not some belief structure.

I'm not saying indoctrinate children. The children must believe. It's not belief at all.

It's an experience. It's a realization. That's what needs to be taught.

That needs to be subject number one at school. Who am I? And everything else is easy once you have that.

[Speaker 2] (26:32 - 27:37)

Well, I'm not sure I have any more questions. We'll press on. I want to ask you about the work that we do at Google.

And if you look at any given web page, it's almost a model of the mind. There's all of these jumping off points. You can jump to this story, or that story, or Hawaii vacation, or you can jump around so easily.

And in fact, the product I work on, Google+, allows me not only to examine the world, examine the contents of my own mind, but all of these people's minds as well, in a flood of a stream coming at me. And I'm wondering if the real reason you've chosen to come to Google today is because we're actively working against you. And you've come to help us get over that.

But more seriously, do you think there's a place for technology? And how do you make sense of the work that we're doing and how it impacts people's attention in relation to what you just described, sort of transcending the mind and going to a deeper place?

[Speaker 1] (27:40 - 42:13)

Well, the technology is quite miraculous, of course. In itself, it's neither good nor bad. I only recently, which means like two or three years, started using it.

I came to it very late. I've still haven't developed an addiction to it, as many people have. There are incredible possibilities here with that technology.

And there's also a great danger with that technology. It could lead to contribute to the awakening. And an example of that is our gathering here, which people can apparently see on their screen.

So this is just one example of how this technology can contribute to spreading a vital message. It goes far beyond any ideology or anything like that. Same thing, the work I did with Oprah some years ago for the first time, the webinar, as they call it, went out.

And the whole first time, the whole system broke down, because so many people tuned in. And then the second week, it started to work. We don't have that problem.

So there are incredible possibilities also for humans to connect with each other. Well, that's another topic, whether they're really connecting as human beings. But also, the fact that the flow of information is no longer monopolized by the powerful few corporations, but everybody can participate in that free flow of information, having led already to all these things, the Arab Spring and all those things that have been happening recently.

All that is potentially good. And the danger, of course, is, and again, that connects with what I've been talking about earlier, that you get more and more inundated with information, with knowledge, with mind stuff, so that you more and more lose a deeper sense of connectedness with being, with presence, that deeper level that I talked about just now. And that would then lead to increasing confusion in your mind and an inability,

really, to create anything new anymore.

You would be just trapped in the continuously increasing mental noise. And if you look at people in this field who do come up with something really creative that is new, they all have some access to that deeper level in themselves, as I'm sure many of you have. And quite a few people don't even know that they have access to that.

It just happens. They become still. And they go for a moment, or a few, they go.

And you connect with the power inside you. You can actually feel that the power of consciousness inside you as you become still. And there's no mind movement in that.

It's a kind of open and listening that opens up. And then, after a while, the mind starts working again. And it's very often, then you have an answer, or then you have the creative solution on some new insight.

But if you don't go there anymore, if you get continuously drawn only into the noise, the mental noise, then you lose touch with your own power. And you become more and more confused. And it could easily happen that what now looks like miraculous technology, within two generations, could lead.

I'm not saying that it will. And we are here now, so there's hope. It could lead to a complete breakdown of civilization.

So here you have this miraculous technology. And two generations later, all humans walk around like zombies. It could happen.

It's an idea for a science fiction novel, perhaps. But it could happen because it's neither good nor bad. If we are not careful, it could draw us in to such an extent that we lose ourselves in our own creation, that we have created something that's an old mythological theme.

We create a kind of entity that becomes a monster. And then our own creation devours us. That could happen.

It doesn't have to happen. So this is, I believe, why I've come here, as a little warning. If you're not careful, then what looks so wonderful here could turn out to be a monster.

But it doesn't have to be. It could turn out into something wonderful that contributes to the awakening of humanity. We need to recognize its dangers.

The danger is that this screen that you look at, of course, connects with your mind. It links into your mind. And then you link into the collective mind on the screen.

And it grows and grows. The noise grows and grows. And you become more and more confused and completely uncentered.

You walk around. I mean, youngsters who are so addicted to their screen, they can't give attention anymore to another human being, to their parents or others. There's always something.

OK. What? I have an iPhone.

I have to hide this here. That's why it's so vital. If you work with your screen all the time, then what do you do?

You have to recognize the danger. And you have to give yourself some space many times during the day, even if it's just one minute at a time. Give yourself space so that a balance arises between that interaction with the screen, which is the collective mind, and connectedness with beings, the way we could put it.

So I sometimes suggest to people to put a flower or a potted flower next to their computer screen so that from time to time, they look at that for half a minute, even a few seconds, and really look or learn to take a breath, a conscious in and out breath. Let's call that a mini meditation. Meditation is very helpful for many people, not for everybody.

If you find it hard to meditate, use mini meditations. One mini meditation is one conscious breath. What does that mean, conscious breath?

It means you look away from the screen. If you can, look at something natural, a plant or the sky. But if not, that's fine.

Look at a light, artificial light, whatever it is. And breathe in and follow the breath with your attention into the body. And then follow it with your attention as it flows out of the body.

What does that do? It takes attention away from thought and puts it into the body. In other words, it creates a space in your consciousness.

Because while you are following the breath with your attention, you are not thinking. And when you are not thinking, but you haven't gone to sleep, you've created a space in your consciousness. And there, that's it.

So that's just one conscious breath occasionally. Two is even better, or three, but that's fine, that's enough. And of course, that's the oldest...

One of the oldest forms of meditation is conscious breath, probably already recommended by the Buddha, who was supposed to have said, just be conscious of your breath for one hour and you'll be totally enlightened. But if you miss just one, you have to go back to the beginning. LAUGHTER And feeling the inner body.

If you don't have... Nature is very helpful to take you out of your mind, although many

people walk around nature and they're still in their minds. But if you can interact with the natural world, the trees, the park, the beach, the mountain, the forest, walking occasionally, and pay attention, truly pay attention to what you see without interpreting, that can bring you into connectedness with being and into the present moment.

Your dog, a wonderful thing I noticed here, people are allowed to bring their dogs. That makes an enormous difference to the energy field, not to every home and to the company. When you interact with a dog, there's a moment when you're not actually thinking.

That's why it feels so good, because you know the dog is not thinking about you. LAUGHTER Although you might have heard the saying, please, God, make me into the person that my dog thinks I am, the fact is the dog isn't thinking. That's why the dog relates to you with unconditional love, because the dog doesn't judge you, and you know that the dog doesn't judge you, and therefore the dog does not stimulate your thinking mind.

It actually frees you for a moment from your thinking mind. That's why people laugh when they see... Unless you have a phobia, that's a different matter.

Most people laugh interacting with a dog. Cats also, but let's talk about dogs, because they're here in the company. So when you pet a dog or even just look at a dog and the tail wags, there's something liberating there for a moment, and that's why humans respond to the dog, and you go, oh!

If you look very closely inside yourself, at that moment, there's a moment when you're not thinking, when you're interacting with a dog. Unless you're so obsessed with your mind that you immediately judge the dog. That can happen, too.

I've met people like that. But for most people, it's a liberating thing, because the dog is nature in its beauty and aliveness, has not arrived yet at the stage of thought that humans have had to go through. So you experience that aliveness of nature in the dog.

So, okay, you have that, and if you don't have a dog, that's fine, too. You can feel nature as the inner energy field in your body. And you can even practice on the computer screen while you're looking at something.

See if you can be in two dimensions at the same time while you are looking. Don't do it at first when there's something extremely demanding. But just when there's some kind of routine thing you're checking on the screen.

And see if you, while you're looking, you can feel the inner energy field of your body, as you do perhaps now, in the background, so to speak. I recommend that as a kind of meditation. You can practice it when nothing is happening on the screen first.

Or put a flower on the screen and look at that and see if you can, at the same time, feel the aliveness in your energy field that keeps you rooted in being. And then you don't lose yourself totally in the collective mind that comes at you through the screen. That's a beautiful, I highly recommend that.

Put a little reminder on your computer screen, a little thing that says, Inner Body, or whatever else you want to call it, so that you remember. And you will find you're more energized. It's extremely energizing to sense that, to be connected with that.

And so one could call that the balance between doing and being in your life. Because thinking is part of doing. Doing is not just what you do physically.

Thinking is also a kind of doing. But the human needs the two dimensions, being and doing. If that balance is lost, you could lose it in being, but that's not the danger of our civilization.

There may be some Indian yogis who get lost in being and don't want to get up anymore because they're so happy in being that there's no need to get up anymore, or even put food in their mouth. That's fine. I'm not talking to them.

I would have to have a different message for them. But I'm talking to this civilization, people who are lost, or who get too much doing, which really is thinking. There the balance is between being and doing.

And even if it doesn't have to be 50-50, 20%, it's hard to put a figure to it.

[Speaker 2] (42:13 - 42:14)

We like to measure things.

[Speaker 1] (42:15 - 42:32)

I know, yeah. So 25% being, 75% doing, then you're doing very well. Even 10% being would make your life much easier and much more enjoyable.

[Speaker 2] (42:34 - 42:44)

I want to remind the Googlers this dual presence technique of being and doing. Please don't do that while coding on the GFS, Big Table, or Megastore systems.

[Speaker 1] (42:45 - 42:47)

I don't know what you're talking about.

[Speaker 2] (42:50 - 43:16)

I do have a question. I think most of us are engineers and technologists, and we live a lot

in the realm of thoughts and ideas and in our head, and not necessarily in our being. My wife has also described to me these things called feelings that some people have as well.

Could you speak about feelings of anger and frustration and happiness and how they relate to this experience of being?

[Speaker 1] (43:16 - 50:09)

Yes. Sometimes words are used in a loose way, and sometimes what I just described, I sometimes call it feeling the inner body. That word is a very vague word, so it can be used to describe what we are just talking about, feeling the inner body, but then there's a different kind of feeling, and that's feeling an emotion, for example, that arises.

So basically, there's thoughts. Let's look at your entire life. Your entire life consists of, basically, sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions.

I think that's about it, right? Sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions. Put them together, mix them up.

That's my life. Okay. So that applies to everybody.

Now, the particular mixture differs from person to person. What exactly goes into the sense perceptions and the thoughts and the emotions varies slightly from person to person, but basically, that's the mixture. Now, the question is, you can't escape that.

Of course, that's normal life. Is there anything else? Sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions.

Okay, let's see. There must be something else, because how do I know that there's sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions? Is the ability to recognize, to have a sense perception based on thinking?

No, because to have a sense perception, you don't really need to think. You can just look and see. So what else is there?

And this is a key thing. There is something else apart from sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, which is, we could call it an awareness. There is a sense perception.

There is an emotion. There is a thought. And that is, we could call that pure consciousness.

Otherwise, how could you have a sense perception? So there is something there that enables sense perceptions to be there, that enables a thought to be there, that enables an emotion to be there. And that is the one, that is the thing that in most humans is hidden.

In other words, they don't know it's there, because that is presence, which we could also call consciousness, which we could also call awareness. And that is the spiritual dimension, and that is the awakening. Once you realize that that is there, we could also describe that as the space for all those other things.

So let's compare this room to your consciousness, and then we say, OK, there's the furniture in the room, there's the bodies in the room, and there are the other lights in this room. Those things are in this room. So if I asked you to describe the room, you would probably describe it in terms of the furniture in it, the walls, the ceiling, whatever you see.

When you describe that room, you would miss the most essential thing about this room, because it's so obvious that you miss it, which is the space that really is the essence of this room. It isn't the walls or the ceiling or the floor or the furniture or the bodies in this room. The essence of this room is the space in this room.

But space is not something tangible that you can say, Ah, there it is. Where? And the same thing applies to inside.

The space of consciousness is the very thing that enables everything else to be, but it's very much like the fish in water that's asked, that says, Why are you always talking about water? You haven't shown it to me yet, says one fish to the other. The other fish is a spiritual teacher.

So what water are you talking about? Where? What water?

And of course, you can't, it's everywhere. It's inside you, it's outside you. But the amazing thing is you can be aware of it, but not as an object, but as the awareness itself.

Ah, I got it now, I got it. But you can't say what it is. You can't say, there it is.

That reminds me of something I read in the New Testament where he said, The kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be perceived. You cannot say, it's over here or it's over there. But truly, I tell you, the kingdom of heaven is within you.

Somebody said that 2,000 years ago, but very few people in the churches understand the depth of it. It gets completely misinterpreted. But that's the depth of, that's the deepest spiritual teaching.

Now that kingdom of heaven, that spaciousness that's in you, it cannot be observed as if it were a chair because it is the observing agent. It is that which makes all observation possible. So it cannot become an object to itself because it is the eternal subject, the I, consciousness itself, the light of the source, you could call it, the light of God, the light of the One.

The ancient Greek philosopher called it the One. It's a beautiful term. And the Buddha didn't call it anything because he said, If I call it something, people will make it into some idol.

So better not call it anything. So when they asked the Buddha, What about God? Well, what they say is, when he was asked that question, he kept noble silence.

And, of course, that noble silence itself is a state of presence. So they asked the Buddha, Tell us about God. And he went, And that's the answer.

[Speaker 2] (50:14 - 51:01)

So you've given us some clues on how to explore this within ourselves. You mentioned changing the balance and things we could do with the breath and a note on our computer monitor and looking at nature. These are some very practical suggestions.

I often find for myself that the time when I would probably most benefit from connecting to that part of myself is the time when I'm least able to. It's the time when I'm very activated and I'm either emotional about something or lost in thought or in the heat of the moment. Do you have any suggestions for how to sort of find that even in the midst of these sort of challenges that come along throughout life?

[Speaker 1] (51:05 - 1:01:25)

First, I recommend that you practice when you're not being challenged because if you can't do it then, then when you're being challenged, it's impossible. So first you practice when you're relatively undisturbed and there's a moment after getting up or you take a short break in your normal daily routine or several short breaks, one-minute breaks, half-minute breaks. So when you're not being challenged then you bring in that awareness.

You become the awareness. You go into the present moment perhaps as I described just now starting with sense perceptions, become alert. An alertness is required to truly perceive things and immediately things become more alive and less problematic when you go into sense perception because the problematic dimension is in the head and you go into sense perception suddenly you go into the present moment and in the present moment problems disappear.

Isn't that strange? So the mind says, well I still have them. Yeah, when you start thinking about them you have them again.

But when you're not thinking about them you have no problems. Now some of you will argue with that but let me explain. You have situations in your life that can be challenging and you have to deal with these situations but the only place where you can deal with the challenging situations is in the present moment.

And dealing with a challenging situation in the present moment is not a problem. You're dealing with a challenging situation. You're facing it.

You're looking at it. And that looking is important. What I call looking really is putting your attention on it which is the power of consciousness.

And while you're looking you're not thinking. Every person who has achieved mastery in any field knows what I mean by looking because there's an absolute presence and then that person does what he or she does. It flows from that presence.

So you look. There's no problem. Problem is when you dwell mentally on something that will happen, could happen, might happen.

A problem is something I have to face next week but not now. And you're totally absorbed in that. That's problem.

An interesting thing I may have even written that in the power of now if you think you have problems ask yourself what problem do I have at this moment? But this moment really means this moment. And then you have to go, hmm.

Well, I've got my wife, my ex-wife is suing me. I'm about to lose my home. A person close to me is ill.

I might lose my job. I have to look for a new job. Okay, what problem do you have at this moment?

You're breathing, feeling the aliveness in the body, looking around. Well, at this moment I don't actually have a problem. You have to then admit if you really go into the present moment the problem cannot survive in the present moment.

That's an amazing realization. Doesn't mean that you no longer deal with what you need to deal with. You deal with it when the moment comes more effectively when you don't waste your life energy in the mental realm of creating problems that you cannot be dealt with at this moment.

And if you wake up in the middle of the night thinking about your problems and what you can do about them it's extremely unlikely that you find any solution by worrying at 4 o'clock in the morning about it. But if you came still at 4 o'clock in the morning and wake up and go into the inner energy field of the body rather than thinking about your problems in other words, leave the dimension of problems come deeply into the present moment then perhaps the next morning when you wake up you suddenly say, Oh, I know what I have to do now. I know how I can deal with it now.

And the right course of action happens because you've gone there but not through the problem-making faculty in the human mind. So, again, coming back to your question

when things are, when you're not being challenged practice it. And then when you are being challenged by little things that goes wrong, so to speak, in daily life tends to happen, you might have noticed things don't always go according to your expectations sometimes you miss the bus or something, you miss the plane or something else goes wrong it tends to happen actually quite a lot.

It seems to be part of life. That's, by the way, it's the reason why people go to see movies because the substructure of every movie that you see we could call it, it applies to virtually every movie you see if you can examine any movie you see what actually happens in the movie I can describe every movie to you in three words something goes wrong. Because there wouldn't be a movie otherwise nothing would happen nobody would evolve everything would be dead but in your own life you complain so you'd see movies to see something go wrong but when it happens in your own life you complain, not you personally you've transcended it perhaps already but so the strange thing is things are not meant not to go wrong going wrong is part of the totality of how life experiences itself if things didn't go wrong it would be very uninteresting and nobody would evolve because people only evolve through the challenges that they encounter and in a good movie the protagonist or the character changes as he or she faces that which goes wrong in the movie in a bad movie so to speak, the character does not go through any changes that which goes wrong is only solved on an external level in the end the bad guy is killed and that's the end of the movie but nothing else happens so something going wrong is part of how life experiences itself and again you can then bring awareness to that so that you don't always fall into reactivity when something goes wrong but you immediately align with it or when people behave in a way that you find offensive or they behave in a way that they create difficulties for you because you wanted this and they want something else you don't have to go into hostility or opposition you can immediately say, oh, that's you see me, this is what is and then how can I approach that without the negativity and just accept that something has gone wrong it's not wrong at all it's called life so something going wrong really what it means is it's called life so you welcome every little challenge so it's a shift in attitude and then your practice becomes easier when you see, you can almost, almost welcome when things happen that before you called things going wrong little things and later big things oh, ok and then you evolve just as a character in a good movie I gave a talk I'm talking about this now because a week ago I was in L.A. and I gave a talk about transformational movies bringing consciousness into the movie industry I gave as an example two movies by Clint Eastwood an early one I think it was called Dirty Harry and that's the, although it's a very entertaining movie it's quite satisfying to watch because the bad guy gets killed in the end nevertheless, it's not a transformational movie in the end you might remember the memorable lines make my day when he is about to shoot the bad guy make my day, punk and that's the most satisfying moment in the movie for the viewer not a transformational but entertaining movie and then many, 30 years later Clint Eastwood made a movie again about bad guys and that movie was called Gran Torino if

you haven't seen it, I recommend that you see it and that perhaps shows a shift in his own evolution because again, we are faced with bad guys but how that is solved well, resolved in the end is very different from the early movie I'm not telling you how here because if you haven't seen it you want to experience it for yourself so that's transformational Gran Torino it's the same actor and I think Clint Eastwood directed the Gran Torino one that probably shows the evolution of his own consciousness from the early stage to the later stage but here this really is a reflection of life you can resist continuously life or you can internally align yourself with life so that your life becomes a good movie rather than a bad movie

[Speaker 2] (1:01:30 - 1:02:06)

so if there's hope for the movie industry there's certainly hope for us, I think so we're going to take the time we have left and take questions both from the Google Moderator online system as well as live in the room here there is one mic in the center and so if you have a question you can approach that mic and if the technicians could get the Google Moderator questions up on the monitor here too that would be helpful and why don't you introduce yourself and maybe what you do at Google and then ask the question

[Speaker 7] (1:02:06 - 1:02:31)

sure, my name is Yonika and I do marketing so I'm one of the, you mentioned there's lots of engineers I'm one of those people that agrees with you and all those codes and terms you mentioned I have no clue what you meant earlier so I just wanted to know about your journey you had explained a little bit in the Power Hour Now about the nightmare of waking up when you're 29, 30 and I just would love to hear about it how you went from that state of anxiety into where you are right now

[Speaker 1] (1:02:32 - 1:09:20)

well Esai for most people the shift is a gradual process from one state of consciousness to another and occasionally it happens in some people as it happened to me that it happened well virtually overnight the shift from one state of consciousness to another and I was deeply depressed for many years and close to suicide several times and that night as I described in the Power Hour Now at the beginning I disidentified from the thinking mind it happened I didn't know that was what was happening it just happened I can't live with myself any longer I thought I was so dreadful I can't live with myself any longer and then suddenly an awareness came in I didn't know it was called awareness an awareness came in and looked at the thought and the thought suddenly looked very strange the thought seemed to consist of two people I and myself I can't live with myself so then another thought came am I one or two and who am I and who is that self that I can't live with that's almost a Zen like question and like all Zen questions it didn't really have an answer on the conceptual level so on the conceptual level I didn't get an answer but the answer was that the myself and the I suddenly separated and I realized although

I couldn't have explained it then that the myself was a mind created entity the me the poor little unhappy me it consisted of mind movement an identity a mental identity of an unhappy human being with an unhappy history and a very uncertain future that probably applies to many humans not if you work at Google that there was a separation and what was there was an I suddenly that saw that and that I years later I realized what that I was it was consciousness itself that had so before there was consciousness and thinking forming one a unity my consciousness was trapped in my thinking through the suffering at that night and looking at that sentence the consciousness separated itself from the movement of thinking and the self that I couldn't live with was not being sustained anymore by consciousness it was and it it kind of crumbled it was a false self that crumbled and what was left was simply a space of awareness and the next morning I felt very peaceful never felt that peaceful before nothing had changed in my environment and I couldn't understand it it took probably at least three, four years before I could begin to understand what had happened all I realized I'm suddenly so peaceful the whole world is peaceful what happened? so this the mind itself had had dissolved and later I talked to some Buddhist monks and others and through listening to them I said I realized when they talked about the teaching of the Buddha later I also realized that Jesus was talking about the same thing but I realized the the Buddha talked about the the delusional self the unreality of the self that the self is not real as it's called in the talk there is no self really anatta is the word in the Pali language in the Buddhist teaching it's an illusion that self is an illusion so when I talked to Buddhist monks I began to realize it was three years later oh that must have been what happened this must be why I feel so peaceful so understanding came much later the realization it kind of just happened and then it became a teaching so I'm now showing to people this is something that you can that can happen in your life but for most people it's a gradual process of disidentification from the thinking mind which doesn't mean you don't think anymore it just means your identity or yourself isn't trapped in it so the thinking is free of self and that's very liberating and you essentially who you feel yourself to be and who I feel myself to be is not to do with the physical form or my personal history or what I have achieved in life fortunately because otherwise you get unhappy if you for many years before I wrote The Power of Now and it became successful I was basically a failure in the eyes of the world so he's already almost 50 and what has he achieved my mom said you have thrown away your life you had so many possibilities in your life you walked out of graduate school in Cambridge why did you walk out of there my mom and many other people said this person has failed in life he has no job he has no insurance policies nothing no pension plan just almost nothing in the bank failure and then a few years later people bought The Power of Now and became a best seller oh a big success ok if I had derived my identity at that time from what the world was telling me or my mind would have told me if I had been listening to my mind I would have been very unhappy and I didn't so I was fine because my identity wasn't derived from that anymore and fortunately even when in the eyes of the world I suddenly became a success I don't want to derive my identity from that it's a cheap substitute for who I really am so I don't see I don't derive

but the satisfaction that comes is the satisfaction that the work that's happening the teaching that's happening is transforming people's lives that's very satisfying I don't get any personal satisfaction though because it's not I don't feel it as this separate me produced it

[Speaker 2] (1:09:23 - 1:09:41)

I have a question about that you mentioned for you the transformation came quite suddenly and for others it happens more gradually do you have any sense of why that is is it because you had bottomed out and were having these feelings or is it because of a certain ripeness that had brought you to that moment or is it just inexplicable

[Speaker 1] (1:09:41 - 1:11:22)

I don't have the answer to that I don't know why some people have said well it must have something to do with past lifetimes maybe or whatever it is or maybe I suffered more deeply than others I don't know I think there are many people who suffer deeply so I don't have the answer to that I'm quoting the Dalai Lama who loves saying I don't know but usually after he says that he starts talking and then the answer is actually quite meaningful the wonderful thing is really what he's starting with is this space I don't know and then something comes but he doesn't say yeah I know probably as Socrates if you've read any Plato ancient Greek philosophy Socrates also taught in that way although in Plato perhaps I'm only talking to a few people here in Plato Socrates, the way he teaches is he continuously when reported by Plato he teaches as if he didn't know so he asks these questions people ask him a question and he asks well what do you think how is this in Plato Socrates pretends not to know but I believe the real Socrates who never wrote anything the real Socrates actually came from that place of not knowing but that was misinterpreted by Plato as if Socrates were pretending not to know but let's not go into deeply into that laughter laughter

[Speaker 5] (1:11:24 - 1:12:09)

hello my name is Mary I work in HR so here at Google I have this really wonderful class called Search Inside Yourself created by Meng whom I believe you met with and yesterday was our last class and we talked about compassion and having compassion for the world so I work in HR so all of us HR people have lots of compassion for other people because it's our job but we also work at Google and Googlers are sort of a high achieving bunch not only high achieving in the eyes of the world but high achieving to ourselves meaning did I get up out of bed today and what did I accomplish if I didn't accomplish anything I'm a failure to myself so I was wondering if you had any advice for those of us who don't have as much compassion for ourselves

[Speaker 1] (1:12:10 - 1:18:08)

ok thanks well yes compassion for yourself of course is as important as compassion for others when often I get asked questions like people who did something that they now realize was deeply wrong in the past sometimes people ask questions about they brought up their children in a way that they now realize was not very conscious and so that they may have caused suffering to their children or other people find they have caused suffering to loved ones and they now realize that what they did was wrong and again I say this is an example where you need to be compassionate with yourself because no human being can act beyond their level of consciousness so that was your level of consciousness at the time and you could not go beyond that and again here to make demands upon yourself up to a point it might be a good thing to as long as you enjoy it it's a wonderful thing when the enjoyment of what you are doing is lost then you have to be careful because there you have to come to a stop and say ok there's something here that's not right because I'm no longer enjoying what I'm doing that really that's the danger and so as long as you enjoy you don't even need compassion don't listen some people have a very active mind the maybe that's what Freud called the super ego or some other entity that criticizes you some people have a particular function in their minds that's very critical of themselves perhaps everybody has it to some degree but some people have it to a high degree and that's a dreadful thing to live with, living with a voice in your head that continually criticizes you and tells you you haven't done well enough you're not good enough, you should have done better I mean if you had to live with a person like that you would leave I mean it would be horrible to live with a person who continuously tells you these things but if that thing is stuck in your head what can you do?

Now what you can do is to become aware that all that it is, it's a particular pattern in your mind it's a particular way in which your mind works and so it's a, you could call it a sub-personality but what it really is, it's a mind pattern that operates in you and when you bring awareness to it you can recognize it as a mind pattern in you in other words you no longer believe every thought that arises that it says you recognize it's an old pattern that says the same thing that it said five years ago or ten years ago and it says that all the time and you recognize it so in other words you're not trapped in the thoughts anymore, this is again the whole thing we are talking about you're not, you don't believe in every thought that comes into your head, what that really means is there's an awareness beyond the thought and you realize there's a voice in my head saying this again that's all it is and when you don't energize it with your identification it begins to subside and in this way you become free of the of this dreadful burden of having that thing in your head talking to you and making your life miserable but what matters is the awareness needs to be there that frees you because then you become the awareness rather than being the thought or being trapped in the thought or possessed by the thought again there's a movie that many of you have probably seen called A Beautiful Mind it's about a scientist actually based on a real person, what happened to him quite a genius in his field but he developed delusions he saw people that weren't

there whatever it's called clinically schizophrenia or whatever and the great thing about the movie is the viewer up to the point where the protagonist realizes that these things are illusions and the viewer of the movie doesn't know it either, the viewer participates in the illusions of the protagonist he believes these people are real too until suddenly the protagonist realizes, oh my god I'm seeing things that are not there and then he continues to see these things but suddenly there's an awareness in him and so although these people still appear to him that are not really there there's an awareness in him there that he's no longer totally reactive to them, he doesn't feed them with his reaction and gradually they subside over years it takes years for them to subside but the decisive point is, although the word is never mentioned, the decisive point is the awareness, wow and that's the same thing that applies to any any pattern in the human mind, not just a totally totally insane pattern, bring awareness to it so that you're not tortured by that and really and real compassion always arises out of awareness anyway

[Speaker 2] (1:18:10 - 1:18:25)

my childhood violin teacher used to shake his finger at me and say, you hear but you don't listen and he didn't mean it as a compliment, but it seems like this may be the technique for dealing with the inner critic.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:26 - 1:18:27)

Oh yes very good, yes

[Speaker 4] (1:18:28 - 1:19:20)

laughter yes Hi, thank you first Eckhart for coming tip the microphone I wanted to ask you it seems like the state that you're talking about of being at peace and being in the moment it's a very appealing state you feel more in touch and I'm wondering why society or people why is there this attraction to distraction and what is it about us that leads us to develop these systems that take us away from that well distractions

[Speaker 1] (1:19:23 - 1:23:38)

excitement stimulus are kinds of drugs or substitutes for the true feeling of aliveness within yourself so in the absence of that true feeling of aliveness within yourself, which we could call connectedness with being connectedness with source you have to look to the outside for something to make you feel more alive because when you're totally trapped in your thinking mind there's a lack of aliveness there's a sense that something fundamental is missing in my life it's an unconscious sense for many people but that is the basis for many people's lives is actually a sense of lack and that's an amazing thing if you really look at that the basis for your life is there's something missing and there are millions of people on the planet who live their lives on that basis without even fully recognizing it as if continuously they were telling themselves and certainly feeling

something missing here so they're always how can I fill that thing that's missing they don't know what's missing but there's something it may sound familiar to some of you because it's such a prevalent mind pattern something missing I need something and of course what's missing is the true sense of connectedness with being, with aliveness and then of course you look for okay what's the next fix that I can get because and then you kind of become a little bit greedy and addictive for some, for stimulus that's why the movies the bad movies they need to, they produce more and more things that stimulate it more and more into violence and so because at least it's a substitute feeling of aliveness and then you look for the next fix. Some people get it in drugs or alcohol it's as if you it's almost like needing to suck up something to fill that thing that's missing or you're looking to another human being to fill it sex where's my next the next or even the the the next affair the excitement that comes from you just starting a new love affair wow now it's really happening of course and then you start living together and then it goes downhill from there so that doesn't work and so always looking for something and not knowing that what you've been looking for is actually already within it's in you and just it's a taking attention instead of out there looking for it going there this is where I start in the power of now giving the parable about a beggar sitting on an old box holding his baseball cap and can you spare a dime for years he sits on this box can you spare a dime and until finally somebody comes along and he doesn't give him a dime and says what's in that box you're sitting on I'm telling that parable in the book nothing I've been sitting on it for years it's just an old box and the man says well look inside and he finally gets ok and it's full of gold he's been sitting on it for years begging it's just a little parable cause the real thing is not even close to you it's essentially part of who you are so that's the reason why people they even look for stimulus in drama in relationships because it makes them feel well at least we are still alive we are fighting we must be alive

[Speaker 2] (1:23:39 - 1:23:46)

I think we'll have time just for one more question

[Speaker 6] (1:23:49 - 1:24:29)

my name is Alex I am an equipment maintenance tech so I keep rooms like this operational so you gave us some very practical things to try to rid ourselves of distraction I'm curious about another issue really strong emotion for example like right now I'm like nervous there's no reason to be nervous nothing bad could possibly happen how do you overcome emotions like that jealousy hatred any strong emotion do you have any practical tips that we could try for that

[Speaker 1] (1:24:29 - 1:29:58)

well first it's helpful to see the connection which is usually the case between the particular thoughts that you are thinking and the emotion that you feel most of the time

the emotions are caused by particular patterns in your mind for example anxiety is caused by thinking about possible future things that may happen or things that you want to happen but they may not happen you may not get what you want you may not get what you need you may lose what you already have these things are all mind patterns that create fear so very often it is the thought that creates the emotion and the thought creates the emotion because you totally believe in the thought in other words you are totally identified with the thought then the body responds as if the thought were reality I might lose my job if you think that you wake up in the middle of the night and then you start thinking more thoughts on those lines the body can't tell the difference the body kind of responds to the thoughts that go through your mind they affect the physiology of the body I mean if you doubt that you might think of biting into a lemon and you find saliva accumulating in your mouth so what you think affects the body the body believes your thoughts to be real so when you think that you might lose your job you've lost your job already according to the body and you're destitute and that's how the body reacts and that's how the emotion is created so it's often then by looking seeing a thought as untrue that you actually begin to become free you can only see it as untrue if there's an awareness there that is aware that there is a thought without the awareness there's only the thought the thought then swallows up your entire consciousness and there's nothing else you can do then but with awareness here's the awareness and here's the thought and then the thought may still operate for a while but it's not empowered anymore and the emotion then is also going to weaken there may be times when there's not much thought as in this one you just said when you came up to the microphone you felt nervous perhaps you didn't have any particular thought on this occasion you just came nervous because many people when they go up to a microphone and speak in public feel nervous and again in these cases it's a question of simply allowing, acknowledging the emotion and allowing it to be there as I sometimes put it you become the space for it you allow it to be there so you could step up to the microphone actually what you said is very helpful when you go to the microphone you start by saying I feel nervous my hands palms of my hands are sweaty because I'm here it's the beginning of allowing it to be there without feeling that I shouldn't be feeling nervous then you feel even more nervous but if you allow the emotion to be there there comes a little space around it and there's an aware space yes there's nervousness but there is an awareness around it so you're not totally in the nervousness you allow it and when you share it with others it's a lovely thing when you share an emotion in that way with others rather than inflicting your emotion on them and saying you did that to me but when you say when you said that this is what I felt there's an awareness there rather than you made me feel this you can say when you said that this is what I felt or at this moment this is what I feel everybody loves that and there's an honesty with that rather than coming out to the microphone and pretending not to be nervous it's actually much more powerful and you connect more deeply if you're ever going to public speaking perhaps you will you connect much more deeply to the audience when instead of hiding the fact that you're nervous you start off by saying I feel really nervous then you connect with everybody if you're

pretending you don't connect so again just a brief summary see what thoughts are causing the emotion which is often the case or in other cases if an emotion just arises allow it to be the space for it and it's part of your experience of the present moment and you might as well say yes to it because whatever arises in the present moment is as it is already whether you argue with it or not the present moment is always as it is that's the is-ness and when you become friendly with the is-ness that in itself is a transformation of consciousness

[Speaker 2] (1:30:02 - 1:30:35)

so there's a lot of people to thank I want to start by thanking those that tuned in on the webcast I want to thank all of you Googlers who chose to take your afternoon and spend it here with us I want to thank Rich and the learning and development team here at Google who make events like this possible and of course I want to thank Eckhart on behalf of all of us thank you for your wisdom thank you for your being and also your doing in the world your choice to share this knowledge with us you've given us a lot to think about and more importantly the ability not to think at all

[Speaker 1] (1:30:36 - 1:30:37)

thank you